



CHAPTER XXV.

After a pause, Pratt continued.

"Having decided to ransom his son, John Oakburn produced the seventy-eight thousand dollars of his employer's money, which by chance he had brought with him, and placing it in my hands, he said:

"Take it. It is the price you demand for my son's liberation. This is my employer's money, but I will replace it with my own money, which is in my little private safe."

"Then John Oakburn's little safe was robbed on the night of the murder!" exclaimed Paxton.

"After this we permitted Reid Oakburn to go away with his father. First, however, we gave him one thousand dollars of the marked money to continue his flight with."

"In former days in Kansas City, Kregde and Reid Oakburn were great friends, as I happen to know, because Kregde was then employed by me. Kregde objected to taking part in any scheme against Reid, but his love of money was greater than his friendship, and he consented finally when we promised him a share of the money we wrung from Oakburn. Now I have told you the whole story, and every word of it is the truth."

Thus Pratt concluded.

Paxton and Stanmore were both convinced from Pratt's manner that his story was not a fabrication, surprising as his statement was.

After this Pratt wrote out a document which was a clear and concise explanation of how Stanmore had been made the dup of the prime swindler, and which proved his entire innocence of the swindle, at the head of which he had been placed by Pratt and Weeks.

When the paper had been read and approved by Stanmore, a message was sent to Weeks, who soon put in an appearance. The situation was explained to him, and, making a virtue of necessity, he signed Stanmore's vindication with his partner.

After this the two soundrels were permitted to go.

Paxton and Stanmore at once repaired to a police station, where the man who exchanged overcoats with Stuart Harland had been lodged in a cell by the agent who had arrested him.

This man was told of Pratt's confession, and he confirmed the broker's story perfectly. In conclusion he said:

"Yes, my real name is Reid Oakburn, and I am John Oakburn's son."

"How came the skeleton keys in the pocket of the overcoat you exchanged with Harland?" asked Paxton.

"Before I was recognized and trapped by Pratt, I had been prowling about Garrison's office, but I had not revealed myself to my father. I knew that he formerly kept his money in the little safe, with his curious weapons and coins, and I meant to rob his private safe."

"I took the key impressions and had skeleton keys made for the outside and interior door. I also had a key made for the big safe. I meant to blow open the little one, for I could not get into the private office to take an impression."

"I was in league with a band of burglars, with whom I had recently formed an acquaintance, and an experienced 'safe-blower' was to help me do the job."

"Well, I fled from the city the night of my father's death. I merely did so to deceive Pratt and Weeks, for I distrusted them, and feared they might seek to betray me to the police, after all."

"I meant to return, and so I did, after going to Albany, where I procured a complete disguise, from a Jew, to whom I was recommended by one of the band of burglars I had joined."

"On the way to Albany it occurred to me that Pratt and Weeks might have had me shadowed to the depot and telegraphed my description ahead, so as to secure my arrest without seeming to have investigated it. I felt the necessity for an immediate change of costume, and that was why I appropriated the land's coat which I forgot to take the keys out of the pocket of the coat I left behind."

"Later, after my return to the city, I met Levi Kregde, whose complicity with Pratt and Weeks I did not suspect, and one whom I thought no temptation could induce to betray me. I revealed myself to him, and he carried a note to my half-sister, Marion, for me."

"She had always been kind to me, and I had always hoodwinked her as to my real character, and thus won her sympathy. She sincerely thought I was more sinned against than sinning."

"After that Marion met me, but she had been tracked, and I fled to escape a detective. One night, not long ago, I chanced to be at the house of Mother Kitts, when I discovered, much to my surprise, that Marion was a prisoner in a rear room there. Unknown to Mother Kitts, I had just liberated her, and I was about to lead her out of that house when you appeared, Mr. Paxton."

"I had told Marion that I was a fugitive, accused of a crime which I had not executed, and as I took the most solemn oath that I was innocent, she implicitly believed me."

"When she saw you she whispered at me, 'Flee, I'll prevent his following you.' Then it was that she confronted you in the door, with the revolver leveled while I escaped through a rear exit."

"After my escape, I tried in vain to learn what had become of Marion."

"Before I knew that the money paid to Pratt and Weeks by my father was marked, I gave Marion a ten-dollar note from the money I had received from the men who betrayed me."

"By Levi Kregde I had previously sent Marion a photograph of myself, taken while I was in disguise, so that she would know me when we met."

"With this Reid Oakburn was silent."

The mystery of Marion's connection with the supposed assassin, and as to how she came by the marked bank note which she had changed at the little

shop where Paxton received it, was explained.

"Who do you suspect is your father's murderer?" asked Paxton.

"Levi Kregde!" answered Reid Oakburn in a tone of conviction.

"Why so?"

"Because he was flush of money after the murder, and it was not marked money he had. I think he robbed my father's little private safe, after killing the old gentleman."

The detective questioned Reid Oakburn further, but nothing worthy of record was elicited after that, and the interview was cut short by the arrival of one of Paxton's agents, with a note from the villainous janitor, who requested him to come to his cell as soon as possible, as he had decided to make a confession.

"Will he confess the murder? How will the mystery be explained?" wondered Paxton.

He felt that the denouement was sure to be set there after the time, with the least delay to the Tomb, where Levi Kregde was confined:

As soon as he was in Kregde's cell the janitor began:

"I am going to make a clean breast of the job. I don't want to be put on trial for John Oakburn's murder."

"You've come to your senses at last."

On the night of John Oakburn's death, I entered the office through the rear window where you found my tracks. I had found out that John Oakburn kept a large sum of money in his little safe, and having a duplicate key to it, I meant to rob it."

I had entered the office, after forcing open the window and raising the window, and had robbed the safe and looked it up again just as I had found it after securing the money, nearly eighty thousand dollars, on my person, when suddenly John Oakburn entered the outer office."

I had only time to hide behind a desk when he came into the interior office, and he unlocked his little private safe."

I shall never forget the cry of agony he uttered when he discovered that the safe had been robbed."

He reeled into the outer office and fell into a chair."

The old man had paid the seventy-eight thousand dollars he drew from the bank that afternoon, and which belonged to Garrison, to save a scapegrace son of his from arrest. Pratt and Weeks had captured that son, and to them John Oakburn paid Garrison's money, intending to replace it with the money which was in his little safe."

I remember the way the old man muttered as he sat there after he discovered the loss of his money."

"I am ruined, I am an embezzler, I have appropriated my employer's money to my own use, I have betrayed a sacred trust. I have kept it a secret that I had saved a large sum of money, and that it was in my little safe. My story will not be credited. I will not live to suffer this awful disgrace, I whose one wish was to live an honest man, and dying leave a spotless reputation. I will die by my own hand."

It was like that he went on, I almost remember his exact words. Then he seized a pen and began to write. I watched him breathlessly, and bad as I am, I resolved to save his life, to prevent his committing suicide."

When he had written for some time, he came to his safe again, and took out a pistol. He carried the weapon out into the outer office, and I heard him say:

"I will kill myself in ten minutes."

I saw him sit down, pistol in hand, and watch the clock. The time was almost up, and I was about to rush out and disarm him, when he threw down the pistol saying, 'I am afraid.' I saw that he trembled from head to foot. After that he paced the room for a moment or so, and finally he picked up the pen and wrote a few lines. Then as if he had decided, he picked up the pistol again."

"I cannot face the weapon. The sight of the pistol unnerves me. If I could not see, I might have the nerve to pull the trigger."

Then he took up the pistol once more, opened a drawer and took out a ball of twine. Tying one end of the twine to the trigger of the pistol, after coining it he placed the weapon in a bracket at the side of the door, where there had been a lamp, and with the cord in his hand walked back to the table."

Before I could prevent it, and before I fully comprehended what he intended to do he pulled the string attached to the trigger, the weapon, which was an air pistol, was discharged without report, and Oakburn fell dead, shot through the back of the head. In his fall he overturned the table."

I sprang forward and secured the paper which he had written, for I surmised it was a statement that he had committed suicide."

Then I left the office as I had entered it, taking care to close the window and the blind behind me. I had an idea that the suicide's last written words might be of value to me in case I was suspected, and the result proves that I was right, said Kregde."

CHAPTER XXVI.

At last the secret of John Oakburn's fate was revealed. The unfortunate man had not been murdered, but he had committed suicide."

"In proof of the truth of what I have told, I'll show you the paper Oakburn wrote just before he shot himself. Will one of you gentlemen loan me a knife? I sewed the document up in the lining of my coat, so that I could not possibly lose it," said Kregde."

Paxton gave him a pocket-knife, and, ripping the lining of his coat, he drew forth a written paper and handed it to the detective, who read it.

The contents of the paper read as follows:

To my beloved daughter Marion and my respected employer, Jason Garrison:

To save my only son from a cruel fate, I paid the money I drew from the bank to-day, \$78,000, to Pratt & Weeks, intending to replace it with the money which I have saved, and which I had locked up in my private safe. After this appropriating the money that did not belong to me, I found my safe had been robbed, and all my money taken. I cannot live to face my disgrace."

Let no man be accused of my murder. To the care of the good Lord I commend my daughter, whom I love, and it is my prayer, that she may believe that I am unfortunate, not dishonored.

(Signed) JOHN OAKBURN.

That this letter had been written by John Oakburn there could be no doubt.

"I was, indeed, on a false trail, but the fact that the shot which killed Oakburn was clearly fired from a distance caused every one to exclude the possibility of suicide from the case," said Paxton.

The detective began to think the mystery of Marion's conduct was clearing up."

To shield her father's memory from dishonor and disgrace, the noble girl, who must have first discovered her father when Stuart Harland saw her stealthily leaving the office, removed the pistol with which he killed himself, and destroyed every evidence that might point to suicide, so that the impression might be given that he had been murdered and robbed. She is a true heart. She was, indeed, inspired by a noble purpose," said Paxton.

"You have stated the truth, I firmly believe," said Stanmore.

"Yes, you have hit it at last. Marion Oakburn is as innocent as you and as true as steel. To save her father's memory from dishonor," said Kregde."

"But what about the money you stole? You haven't told us where to find that," said the detective.

"I've spent about three thousand dollars of it, and the rest is hid. It's safe, you can bet on that. Don't fret about it. I mean to make a bargain with you. I answered the scoundrel, with a cunning leer."

"In what way?"

"Promise me I'll be discharged and I'll give up the money."

"We'll see about that," said Paxton.

"Yes, Marion must be consulted," said Stanmore.

"I've that is, the girl will be glad to consent to let up on me when she knows of the money," said Kregde. "Now you understand my remarks which puzzled you heretofore, I take it," he replied.

"Perfectly," replied Paxton, and accompanied by Stanmore he soon left the prison.

After this, some days elapsed, and then to Stanmore's inexpressible joy, Marion's malady took a favorable turn. The physician declared the crisis passed, and he gave Stanmore the assurance that Marion would recover."

As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to warrant it, Stanmore told Marion of the confession made by Pratt and Weeks, and by Levi Kregde, the janitor."

We understand the mystery of your conduct now. You meant that your father's memory should be shielded. When you knew that he appropriated Garrison's money and committed suicide, you determined that the world should believe he had been robbed and murdered," he said.

"Yes, that is the explanation. But I must tell you all. On the night of my father's death, I became alarmed at his absence, and without disturbing any one, I descended to the office, thinking it possible he might be there. He sometimes worked in the office in the evening. When I entered the office, I found my father dead. On the floor beside him was a sheet of paper upon which he had written a few lines. I remember them well. They were as follows:

"Heaven bear witness that I was in intention innocent, but I have appropriated the seventy-eight thousand dollars belonging to my employer, which I drew from the bank to-day, to my own use. I have decided I shall die by my own hand, but I cannot face the pistol. I shall place it in the bracket by the door and discharge it by means of a string attached to the trigger, while my back is turned. Farewell, Marion, my daughter."

After I read this, while Kregde secured the first message written by your father, when he had decided to commit suicide, he did not find the message which you have repeated," said Stanmore.

"When I read my dear father's message, I resolved that he should not be branded as a thief. That his memory should be revered, that he should leave behind him the reputation he dearly prized, that of an honest man."

"Then I remembered the pistol, secured the tell-tale letter, and stole from the office. After concealing the weapon in my trunk, I went to Judith's room, and then we descended together to the office. What ensued you know."

The paper, upon which I depended to prove my innocence when I knew I was suspected as being concerned in my father's death, was his last message. I despaired, when I discovered I had lost it."

"When, during the process of Stuart Harland's trial, I became convinced that he would be found guilty, I resolved to tell all, but Judith must have discovered my intentions, I think, for the night I made the resolution that on the following day I would come forward with my testimony and save Stuart Harland, I was abducted while unconscious from some anesthetic which had been administered when I slept, and when I awoke I found myself a prisoner in the house of the old woman called Mother Kitts. When, after Reid's escape, I was dragged back to the prison-room from which he had liberated me, I secured my father's last message, which was concealed in my bosom, in a hole in the wall of the fire-place."

Next morning, after a troubled sleep, I looked for the paper and it was gone."

Thus Marion explained, and, further, she confirmed Reid's statement that he had deceived her as to his real character."

Now that she knew him she despised him, and a fierce desire that he should be punished for having indirectly been the cause of her beloved father's death, the lovers conversed tenderly for some time, and at last Stuart left the bedside of the fair invalid, and sought Paxton the detective, and together they proceeded to the house of Mother Kitts. The fire-place in the room where Marion had been imprisoned was demolished, and there where it had slipped down behind a brick from the aperture, in which Marion had concealed it, John Oakburn's message was discovered."

Everything was clear now. Of course the terrible letter which Paxton had received from Judith Kregde purporting to be the confession of the murder made by Marion was a forgery, and that it was such Judith Kregde subsequently acknowledged."

Stanmore now revealed himself in proper personality as Donald Wayburn, and since he had the proof that he was an honest man, his friends of other days welcomed him home again."

Marion would not consent that the man whose deed had driven her father to suicide should be allowed to go unpunished in consideration of his repentance."

turning the money he had stolen, and Kregde was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment."

Reid Oakburn died of consumption, from which he had long suffered while he was held a prisoner awaiting the action of the Denver authorities."

Judith Kregde was obliged to return the money which she had extorted from Marion, and she left New York."

Pratt and Weeks also disappeared."

Of course Stuart Harland's innocence was proclaimed, and soon after he and Edna Garrison were married."

Marion entirely recovered and within a year she became the beloved wife of him whom we have known as Richard Stanmore."

Jason Garrison was once more prosperous, thanks to Stanmore's assistance, but he never forgot the terrible lesson taught him by the brigands of Wall Street, and to Stanmore's heirs he paid the amount of the forged check."

Paxton declared that he would find the money stolen by Kregde, and at last, after encountering many perils, he succeeded in accomplishing his purpose, and Marion's fortune was restored to her."

The detective received the reward Stanmore had promised him, and he is to-day the most successful detective in America."

True and perfect happiness was the future lot of Marion and her husband, and though her conduct had made her father's fate a great detective mystery, Marion's friends honored the purpose which had actuated her."

[THE END.]

The Saucy Little Wretch.

A story is told by Mrs. Elizabeth Akers Allen, the author of "Rock Me to Sleep, Mother." "The words had been set to music long before I ever heard them sung," she says. "One day on the street I was electrified by hearing a small gamin warbling most musically the words of my poem. I stopped short and looked at him. He was in the midst of 'no other worship abides and endures,' but he broke his tune for a moment or two as he saw me and growled: 'What in— are you a-starin' at?'"

He's a Sprinter.

A Russian athlete, M. Valowski, having made a bet that he would cover the distance between Bordeaux and Angoulême, there and back on foot, a total distance of 145 miles, in twenty-four hours, started on a recent Sunday morning. He returned on the following Monday morning, having accomplished the double journey in forty minutes less than the stipulated time, thus winning the wager of 2,000 francs.

The Scandalous Wretches.

The Puritan fathers, who settled in America, were greatly addicted to smoking; indeed, the practice became so common that even these strait-laced observers of time and seasons actually smoked in church. This custom soon caused very considerable annoyance, as the religious exercises were greatly disturbed by the clinking of pipes and the clouds of smoke in church."

Population of France.

The increase of population in France during the last five years has amounted to only one-half of 1 per cent. The population of the great cities is increasing and that of the rural districts decreasing."

For two or three years eminent architects have claimed that the definitive type of commercial architecture had been found in what is known as the "Chicago system," namely, a rigid framework of steel forming the pillars, floor joists, and partitions, supporting the roof and upholding the structure without aid from the exterior walls, which are a mere veneer of brick, stone, or terra cotta. Now, however, comes Gen. Sooy Smith, himself an engineer of the highest scientific attainments, and declares that the steel or iron framework must be discarded and solid stone pillars substituted if absolute safety against fire is sought. It is evident that the adoption of Gen. Smith's suggestion would greatly decrease the available area in a building, as the size of the columns necessary to support a given weight will be greater in stone than if they are made of metal. And as owners seek the maximum amount of income-producing space it is likely that the "Chicago system" will be adhered to despite this scientific criticism of its qualities as a fireproof type of construction."

BUSINESS METHODS HAVE AT LAST been applied to the work of raising money for the Grant monument in New York. Had this been done seven years ago the monument would now be finished, and a pride to New York instead of a disgrace. That city gave as freely to the fund for the relief of Johnston as any other in the country. There was method in the management of that fund. There were committees to solicit subscriptions from all departments of trade, and a large amount of money was raised in a very short time. The same method is to be applied to the Grant monument subscription, and, if it be thorough, the different committees ought to raise the money necessary to complete the monument in a few weeks."

JONES OF Binghamton promises to exhibit at the World's Fair a scale made of mahogany and aluminum. It will be gold-mounted and otherwise got up without regard to expense, and anybody who knows Jones knows that he is able to pay the freight on it."

EVERY year a layer of the sea, fourteen feet thick, is taken up into the clouds. The winds bear their burden into the land and the water comes down in rain upon the fields, to flow back through rivers."

REV. JOSEPH COOK has been struck with a gleam of common sense. He says that Sunday newspapers are published to make money."

## THE NEWS.

zue will providing for separate cars for whites and negroes on the railways passed the Virginia Senate without a dissenting vote. The governor's approval is a foregone conclusion."

In a collision between a special passenger train and a freight train at Waycross, Ga., fifteen passengers were injured."

The Philadelphia coroner's jury found four persons responsible for the death of Miss May Bingham in the optum joint."

The Canajoharie (N. Y.) National Bank suspended, and E. J. Graham, national bank examiner, was placed in charge."

Six hundred operatives at the American Hide and Leather Company's tanneries in Lowell, Mass., went on a strike."

James and Amos Pierce were arrested in Chester, Pa., on suspicion of having murdered George B. Eyrer."

Frederick Lempe, a Christian scientist, committed suicide by thrusting his head into a red hot stove."

Six thousand dollars' worth of diamonds was stolen from Joseph K. Davidson & Son in Philadelphia."

The third dynamite outrage in Leadville, Col., wrecked the home of A. V. Hunter, the millionaire."

Lewis Havens, of Philadelphia, died suddenly in a car at Lenox, N. C."

A fire at Dawson City destroyed \$400,000 worth of property."

Samuel Peter Meyers was hanged at Somerset, Pa."

R. H. Nicholas, a native of Baltimore, and superintendent of the New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk Railroad, died in Philadelphia."

Brigadier General Charles W. Squires, a prominent Confederate during the Civil War, died in St. Louis, aged sixty."

Judge Wallace, in the United States Court at Albany, concurred with the lower court in refusing to grant a writ of habeas corpus in the case of Captain Oberlin M. Carter, convicted of conspiracy against the government."

My Bebehaus, aged nineteen, died in Philadelphia from the effects of smoking opium in a den."

Julius Bandmann, an old merchant of San Francisco, is dead."

John Kionthan died at Berryville, Va., aged seventy-one."

Count Boni de Castellane, with his wife, Anna Gould, reached New York, and denied absolutely that he had lost anything in speculations, declaring that he had never speculated in his life."

A. P. T. Elder, formerly a publisher in Chicago, pleaded guilty to the rape of a female, that city, to having used the mails to defraud."

Clarence W. Robinson was appointed Commonwealth's attorney in Newport News, Va., to fill the vacancy caused by the death of J. K. M. Newton."

John Potter Stockton, formerly United States senator, who was for years attorney general of New Jersey, died at the Hotel Hanover, in New York."

William W. Patch, who during the war saved General Sherman and his staff from capture, died at his home in Galesburg, Ill."

Captain William H. Gibson succeeded Captain Sigbee as commander of the battleship Oregon at the Brooklyn navy yard."

J. Edgar Walton was arrested in the Chicago National Bank on a charge of forgery."

David Murdock, assistant roadmaster of the Maryland division of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Gray's Ferry, Philadelphia, was killed by a train."

The loss by the fire at the winter quarters of the Barnum & Bailey Circus, at Bridgeport, Ct., is estimated at \$125,000. Many cars were destroyed."

Captain Frederick J. Mills, formerly lieutenant governor of Idaho, who killed J. C. McQuinn, was acquitted of murder in Salt Lake."

Edward Oswald was found guilty of murder in the first degree at Camden, N. J., for killing his wife and six-year-old child."

The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Company began shutting down its coal mines in Pennsylvania."

W. J. McConnell, the temperance advocate of Cleveland, died in Philadelphia from excessive use of morphine."

John Brown, a notorious chicken thief, was sentenced, in Norfolk, to the penitentiary for ten years."

As the result of a family row in New York between the Colletts and the Spinellas three of the Colletts were killed and two of the Spinellas were arrested, the third being a fugitive."

The British steamer Sutton, with iron ore, for Philadelphia, was stranded on Fenwick Island Shoals, near Lewis, Del. Boats from the revenue cutter Onondaga rescued the crew."

Marshall Waggoner, an infidel who was converted to Christianity, burned his collection of books on infidelity in the furnace of the United Brethren Church at Toledo, O."

Rev. Charles Earl Preston, of Jamestown, N. Y., who ran away from his wife, was arrested in Troy, N. Y., where he had gone with a young lady of his church."

Miss Kate Herbstschneider, of Princeton, Ill., was acquitted of the murder of Charles Salzman, to whom she had been engaged to be married."

Mrs. Bertha Rupprecht, made despondent by the death of her husband in Batavia, N. Y., made a desperate attempt to commit suicide."

The will of Father Chiniquy, the excommunicated priest, who died in Montreal last year, was filed in the Kanabek County Court. In the will Father Chiniquy says he dies in the faith of the Presbyterian Church."

His property he leaves to his wife and daughters, except his library, worth \$7,000, which he bequeaths to his son-in-law, Rev. Joseph Morin, who is carrying on Father Chiniquy's missionary work in Canada, according to the dead priest's directions."

## DANGEROUS REVOLT.

PLOT OF THE AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

## THE AMBUSH AT LIPA.

Eleven of the Native Officials, including the President and several Councilors, Sent to Prison on the charge of Plotting Treason against the Investigation Shows. —Prominent Men Arrested.

Manila, (By Cable.)—Mail advices from Negros bring particulars of the uprising last month in the southern part of the island, in which Lieutenant A. C. Ledyard, Sixth Infantry, was killed. Instead of being an important revolt of native police, as was at first reported, it appears to have been an attempt to overthrow American authority. The movement was started by the chief officials of the autonomous government, the men who were elected and inaugurated with so much ceremony last November."

Eleven of these officials, including the president and several councilors, were lodged in jail on charges of plotting treason. Several secured their release under heavy bonds, but others remain in prison."

General Smith found evidence that the revolting police were following the orders of the autonomous government, which designed to use the forces under its control to overthrow the Americans. The plot failed through being started prematurely, but Negros was in a state of uneasiness for a week. Two companies of the Twenty-sixth Infantry were hurried from Iloilo to reinforce the garrison at Bacolod."

The officials arrested include some of the most prominent men in Negros. It is believed that they will be expelled from the island."

The escort of fifty men of Company C, Thirtieth Infantry, Lieutenant Baiton commanding, which was ambushed near Lipa, as already cabled, consisted of fifty convalescents from the hospital, who were going to rejoin the regiment. The insurgents hid in the bushes along the road, and opened fire upon the pack train from three sides."

The Americans, in addition to their casualties, were compelled to abandon the train, which consisted of twenty-two horses. The latter, with their packs, all fell into the hands of the insurgents, who pursued the retreating escort for three miles along the road, until the Americans were reinforced."

## FROM WASHINGTON.

In the United States Senate Mr. Pritchard, of North Carolina, made a speech on the ratification of the constitution of the Philippines question. A resolution for an inquiry into polygamy was adopted."

Brigadier General James F. Wade was directed to assume command of the Department of the Lakes upon the retirement